

Wildlife Restoration/Hunter Education Advisory Team

Advisory 2020-023 Stocking Wild Birds and Mammals for R3 Program Delivery

November 2, 2020



Can a State fish and wildlife agency use Wildlife Restoration grant funds to pay for stocking wild birds and mammals (other than pen-raised birds) to hunt as part of an R3 grant?

Discussion: The history of the Wildlife Restoration Program shows that using WR funding for stocking a species was strictly eligible only for restoration purposes. This means that any wildlife species stocking required that the species was released into a habitat where there was a clear expectation of survival and sustainability, thereby establishing huntable populations of desired game species. In 2017, a USFWS [Director's Order](#) was published specifically allowing for stocking of selected birds for the sole purpose of increasing hunting opportunities, and not predicated on the species ability to survive in the habitat they are released to. The Director's Order requires an evaluation component to inform future endeavors related to stocking for R3 purposes. In December 2019, the Modernizing PR Act added eligible activities for R3 and a definition to the WR Act to support those activities:

16 U.S.C. 669a(3): the term "hunter recruitment and recreational shooter recruitment" means any activity or project to recruit or retain hunters and recreational shooters, including by—

(A) outreach and communications as a means—

(i) to improve communications with hunters, recreational shooters, and the general public with respect to hunting and recreational shooting opportunities;

(ii) to reduce barriers to participation in these activities;

(iii) to advance the adoption of sound hunting and recreational shooting practices;

(iv) to promote conservation and the responsible use of the wildlife resources of the United States; and

(v) to further safety in hunting and recreational shooting;

(B) providing education, mentoring, and field demonstrations;

(C) enhancing access for hunting and recreational shooting, including through range construction; and

(D) providing education to the public about the role of hunting and recreational shooting in funding wildlife conservation.

Under the changes to the WR Act in 2019, WSFR could determine that the procurement and stocking of wild game birds and mammals could be eligible as part of a State's R3 program(s).

Advisory: Yes, under the definitions at 16 U.S.C. 669a(3), as part of a well-written R3 plan for hunter recruitment and/or retention, and following the requirements in the [Director's Order](#) issued December 1, 2017, procurement and stocking of wild game birds and mammals as R3 activities may be considered eligible using funds at:

- 16 U.S.C. 669c(c) (Basic Hunter Education or R3)
- 16 U.S.C. 669h-1 (Enhanced Hunter Education/R3)

Costs must be proportional to grant objectives and outcomes, necessary and reasonable, and properly allocated. The measures of target audience, methods and tracking of outcomes, and other R3 components need to be well described in the Approach. The Directors Order on this topic describes compliance requirements and requires an evaluation of this technique to assess if it functions as an effective R3 activity. Evaluation data will also be helpful for the whole R3 Community to assess if and how this approach is an effective R3 tool.